

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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- [REDACTED]
2. Most of the prisoners at the Yelabuga camp were German officers (about 2000) including quite a large number of those captured in the battle of Stalingrad. This camp was dissolved in 1946 so that Japanese prisoners-of-war could be accommodated, and most of the German prisoners were transferred to Zelenodolsk.
 3. A considerable group of German officers at Yelabuga had joined General Seydlitz's group, the Bund Deutscher Offiziere, and pledged themselves to an ideological war against Hitlerism.

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4. The prisoners were housed in buildings formerly belonging to a seminary for the training of priests.

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5. [REDACTED] there, three German officers, a colonel, a major, and a first lieutenant, all belonging to the Bund, were assigned to [REDACTED] persuade the new prisoners to become members of the Bund. In addition, other Germans and even one Soviet came to deliver lectures on Marxism-Leninism. After the lectures there were "free discussions", but one had to be very careful to avoid being called a "fascist".

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The camp commandant and his deputies and administrators were of necessity Bund members. Because the Bund members exercised the authority within the camp, they lived better than the others. They were able to eat better, distributing among themselves all the left-overs from the warm foods. The cold foods, bread, butter, and such, were distributed to all alike according to the established norms.

9. Of the foodstuffs [redacted] there were established lists of items and amounts -- most things were never available. [redacted] daily 600-gram bread ration, 300 grams in the morning and 300 grams in the evening. The bread was the dark, soggy variety but was more filling than the white bread [redacted]

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10. The warm food [redacted] was very bad, consisting primarily of a watery soup or gruel or, rather frequently, fish soup. [redacted]

Even so, since the diet was so insufficient, prisoners would frequently volunteer for the special work brigades merely for the liter of soup the volunteer workers were given, in contrast to the half-liter the non-volunteer workers got. The food was prepared by Germans, but a Soviet woman doctor assigned by the Soviet authorities had to taste all cooked foods before they were served. Because of the widespread stealing, especially of foodstuffs, each prisoner would eat his bread and butter as soon as he received it.

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11. Meals were served extremely irregularly, especially at Yelabuga. Since all food had to be eaten in a very small dining room, the prisoners were awakened at two o'clock for breakfast; the breakfast shifts continued for three hours. Then after May 1945, when work for everyone was obligatory, the supposed mid-day meal was not served until five to eight o'clock in the evening or sometimes as late as ten or 11 o'clock. The evening meal, consisting of only 200 grams of turnips or a similar vegetable, would then be served immediately after the second meal.

12. Sleeping accommodations were very crowded. The old seminary buildings [redacted] were never heated even in the coldest winter -- as cold as 40 degrees below zero. [redacted]

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Eighty-ninety men slept in a room of about 40 square meters. Each man had but 150 centimeters of space allotted on the wooden shelves.

13. According to the Geneva Convention, [redacted] not required to do any work except for that entailed in the administration and maintenance of the camp. [redacted]

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There were, however, voluntary work groups whose members received extra food as a reward for their work. In May 1945, however, after the hostilities in the West had ended, it was announced that the Geneva Convention rule on this point would no longer apply and that all officers through the rank of captain were obligated to work. The personnel of the camp were organized into work companies, each under the direction of an officer belonging to the Bund Deutscher Offiziere.

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14. Most of the men were required to work on a kolkhoz organized by the camp. The men were sent out in two shifts, one about five o'clock in the morning, which was relieved by the second shift sent out about three in the afternoon. The kolkhoz had no tractors and no horses. All work was performed by manpower. Men pulled the plows, the harrows, and the carts. Others were given spades and required to dig up a certain plot of land as their daily work norm.

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15. In addition to these kolkhoz work groups, technical groups were formed and assigned to work in local shops in the town and vicinity. There was very little industry in the region, but some German groups were engaged in blacksmithing and plumbing.
16. Early in 1946 this camp at Yelabuga was gradually dissolved and the prisoners, in groups of about 500 men, were transferred to a series of camps centered around Zelenodolsk.

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17. Prisoner-of-war camps made contracts with these various enterprises for the supply of prison labor. Medical examinations determined the fitness of prisoners for various types and amounts of labor. These examinations took place about once a month. The men were made to walk naked past a commission of doctors, usually women, and then made to walk past again. One of the doctors would pinch the men in the buttock -- presumably to determine how much flesh or fatty tissue a man had -- and then decide upon the appropriate work category. There were four such categories: those who would be required to do all types of work; those who would do only limited types of work; those who would be required to work only six hours a day; and those who were to do no work except perhaps in cleaning up the grounds or peeling potatoes in the kitchen.

18. Norms were established for each type of work. The men were supposed to receive payment for their work, but no one was paid until September 1946, and then only for the over-fulfillment of work norms. (The ten rubles a month

according to the Geneva Convention were not paid until April 1946. Later given back pay

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Then, gradually, put on regular salaries about equal to those of Soviet common laborers, but 200 to 250 rubles would be deducted each month for shelter, food, and clothing.

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19. a field hospital in Zelenodolsk. contained about 700 patients, most of them committed because of undernourishment.

20. Upon entry into the hospital given long under-pants, a shirt, and a hospital coat. No shoes were furnished;

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all patients went about barefooted. The latrine was about 30 meters away from the hospital building, and [] not issued shoes or other clothing for trips to the latrine even in the winter with the temperature 30 degrees (centigrade) below freezing. However, most of the German patients had made or acquired make-shift wooden shoes; the German doctors employed at the hospital hung old military overcoats by the door during the winter for the use of the men going to the latrine.

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21. [] very crowded in the hospital. Five men slept in three beds pushed together and [] not given enough blankets to keep warm. Every two weeks [] given a bowl full of water for bathing. To wash with, [] half a glass of water daily.

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22. In the hospital [] better food than in the camp but the portions were smaller. Soviet hospital personnel ate from the same rations issued the patients. They ate comparatively well and the Germans, therefore, had less to eat. [] only 15 grams of sugar and 20 grams of butter a day. [] given a great deal of fish, but usually only the heads and tails. If one were put on a diet one occasionally received sausage instead of fish.

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23. A Soviet doctor, a woman, visited the patients daily. The hospital staff always seemed to be taking blood and stool tests but rarely examined the patients. If one complained of pains, medicines were usually prescribed but little attempt was made to ascertain the cause of the pains.

[] The doctors frequently gave shots [] The hospital possessed a fluoroscope but no X-ray machine.

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24. Patients considered not very sick were required to work about the hospital cutting wood, keeping the yards clean, and doing laundry. The floors were scraped by the patients every morning beginning at four o'clock. Although there were some Soviet charwomen, they only came to see whether the patients had completed their clean-up tasks.

25. [] fresh linen every two weeks [] the bed sheets were changed every four weeks. There were no bedbugs in the hospital and all patients had been thoroughly deloused on admittance.

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26. It seems that the Soviets were very frightened of spotted fever and were constantly on the lookout for lice among the prisoners. The practice that prisoners were not allowed to have their own underclothing but were given clean underwear when they bathed and were deloused every four weeks kept lice at a minimum. Lice were seldom found in Yelabuga. At Zelenodolsk, however, no one ever received a change of underwear and conditions with respect to lice were not as good.¹

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